

February 21, 2023

Stephanie Thomas and  
State of Connecticut Government Administration  
and Elections Committee

Re: Early Voting & No-Excuse Absentee Voting Public Hearing-February 22, 2023

I am writing in strong favor of early voting and no excuse voting in our state. Connecticut currently is one of **only five states** that do not have early voting. This is clearly “behind the times” and a significant disadvantage for all our eligible voters. We continue to see numerous polling places throughout our state with increasing long lines often a minimum two-hour wait. It is not uncommon for wait times to extend much beyond that. This presents an unfair disadvantage to many voters who want to support our elections on state, local and national levels and recognize the importance of voting and want and/or would vote. Unfortunately, many are unable to do so due to but not limited to various employment conflicts, childcare issues, commuter time, and other restraints. For those able to work around stressful issues, having only one-day requires when/if possible taking time off from work and are forced to take personal/vacation time and some may not be paid. Voters having just one day to navigate numerous and difficult challenges with employment, childcare and elder/family sickness issues could and should have options such as early voting expanding their ability to plan and vote as well as no excuse voting. There are many personal and life challenges people face that do not fit into a limited box of excuses. It is much more difficult and complex than some politicians would like to think.

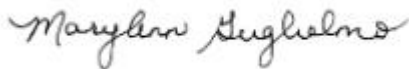
Our state residents should have flexibility to vote over what I would recommend a reasonable 10 period that would include weekends. I have family members and friends with weekly rotating employment schedules and were unable to vote.

My recommendations for all elections:

- Provide 10 days of early voting INCLUDING week-ends
- Polling hours 6:00am-9:00pm (Fairfield County has a large number of commuters often on a train before 6)

- Have No Excuse Absentee Ballots (there are several states that *only* have mail in voting)
- Many poll workers are volunteers and with the amount of money Connecticut residents pay in taxes funding should not be an issue. Our state has been discussing this option for years and local officials should have planned for this. If not, shame on them.
- Keep the drop boxes for mail in ballots

I have often heard some of our political figures say we are a small state and most people feel this is an extremely poor excuse. There are states smaller than ours that have had early voting for a long time and many with much more rural areas that present additional challenges than our state. It is time for Connecticut to do the right thing and make it easier and less stressful for its people, and stop making excuses. Early voting and mail in ballots have been around for years and Connecticut has made such great progress and in many ways leading the country and this would be one more step but a significant step many Connecticut voters (democrats, republicans and independents) have wanted for a very long time.



MaryAnn Guglielmo  
Fairfield County Connecticut